

It is imperative that we find spending cuts to offset sequestration on the Department of Defense. Our military leaders have come to Congress on numerous occasions to explain the limitations the budget cuts are putting on our national security. It is legislative malpractice for this Congress to continue to put our Nation at greater risk. The President needs to come to this Congress with a proposal to offset sequestration in a responsible manner so the Department of Defense can be restored, our national security protected, and the community of Dayton, Ohio, no longer suffers the effects of sequestration.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Safe Climate Caucus to say that climate change is making extreme weather worse and costing us in lives and dollars.

Last week, Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest storm to make landfall in recorded history, struck the Philippines with sustained winds of almost 200 miles per hour. Thousands are reported dead and missing.

Haiyan, Sandy, Irene, Katrina, wildfires, floods, droughts.

If you flip a coin 20 times, it is possible that an honest coin will land on heads every time, but you should start to suspect that there is something wrong with that coin.

Sure, the recent extreme weather event might be coincidence, but as superstorms continue again and again, you should suspect that something is wrong with our climate. We should begin fixing our broken world, not be pretending that all is well.

This week marks the beginning of the 19th U.N. climate change conference in Warsaw, where representatives from more than 190 nations will be discussing climate change and how the world should be responding.

For international climate negotiations to succeed, the U.S. should take the lead, and leading internationally will require us to start here at home.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR THE SIERRAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, this summer the biggest fire in the history of the Sierra Nevada Mountains burned 400 square miles of forest land. The fire left behind an unprecedented swath of environmental devastation that threatens the loss of not only the affected forest land for generations but sets events in motion that could threaten the surrounding forests for many years to come.

The fire also left behind as much as a billion board feet of dead timber on

Federal land that could be sold to raise hundreds of millions of dollars, money that could then be used to replant and restore the devastated forests. In addition, processing that timber would help to revive the economy of the stricken region. But time is already running out. Within a year, the value of the timber rapidly declines as the wood is devoured by insects and rot. That's the problem: cumbersome environmental reviews and the litigation that inevitably follows will run out the clock on this valuable asset until it becomes worthless.

Indeed, it becomes worse than worthless—it becomes hazardous. Bark and wood-boring beetles are already moving in to feast on the dead and dying timber, and a population explosion of pestilence can be expected if those dead trees remain. The beetles won't confine themselves to the fire areas, posing a mortal threat to the surrounding forests in the years ahead.

By the time the normal bureaucratic reviews and lawsuits have run their course, what was once forest land will have already begun converting to brush land, and by the following year, reforestation will become infinitely more difficult and expensive.

Within 2 years, several feet of brush will have built up, and the smaller trees will begin toppling on this tinder. It is not possible to build a more perfect fire stack than that. Intense, second-generation fires will take advantage of this fuel, sterilizing the soil, eroding the landscape, fouling the watersheds, and threatening the surrounding forest for many years to come.

Without timely salvage and reforestation, we know the fate of the Sierras because we have seen the result of benign neglect after previous fires. The trees don't come back for many generations. Instead, thick brush takes over the land that was once shaded by towering forests. The brush quickly overwhelms any seedlings struggling to make a start. It replaces the diverse ecosystems supported by the forests with scrub brush.

For this reason, I have introduced H.R. 3188, which waives the time-consuming environmental review process and prevents the endless litigation that always follows. It authorizes Federal forest managers, following well-established environmental protocols for salvage, to sell the dead timber and to supervise its careful removal while there is still time.

The hundreds of millions of dollars raised can then be directed toward replanting the region before layers of brush choke off any chance of forest regrowth for generations to come. It is modeled on legislation authored by Democratic Senator Tom Daschle for salvaging dead and dying trees in the Black Hills National Forest, a measure credited with speeding the preservation and recovery of that forest.

This legislation has spawned lurid tales from the activist left of uncon-

trolled logging in the Sierras. Nothing could be further from the truth. This legislation vests full control of the salvage plans with Federal forest managers, not the logging companies. It leaves Federal foresters in charge of enforcing salvage plans that fully protect the environment.

The left wants a policy of benign neglect: let a quarter-million acres of destroyed timber rot in place, surrender the ravaged land to beetles, and watch contentedly as the forest ecosystem is replaced by scrub land. Yes, without human intervention the forests will eventually return, but not in the lifetimes of ourselves, our children, or our children's children.

If we want to stop the loss of this forest land and if we want to control the beetle infestation before it explodes out of control, the dead timber has to come out soon. If we take it out now, we can generate the funds necessary to suppress brush buildup, plant new seedlings, and restore these forests for the use and enjoyment of our children. If we wait for the normal bureaucratic reviews and delays, we will have lost these forests to the next several generations. That is a choice. Congress must make that choice now, or nature will make that choice for us.

HONORING PUERTO RICO'S MILITARY VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, Monday was Veterans Day, when our Nation pays tribute to those who have served honorably in the Armed Forces. Today, I rise to express my gratitude to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines from Puerto Rico, both those who are living and those who have left us.

Since World War I almost a century ago to Afghanistan today, American citizens from Puerto Rico have built a rich record of military service. If you visit any U.S. base, you will see warriors from Puerto Rico fighting to keep this Nation safe, strong, and free. They serve as officers and enlisted personnel; as special operators; in infantry, artillery, and armored units; as pilots and aviation technicians; in intelligence; on ships and submarines; in combat support positions; and in every military specialty.

In his book, "Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide," former U.S. Attorney General Dick Thornburgh observed:

Historically, Puerto Rico has ranked alongside the top five States in terms of per capita military service.

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In the forward to that book, former President George H.W. Bush noted:

This patriotic service and sacrifice of Americans from Puerto Rico touched me all the more deeply for the very fact they have served with such devotion, even while denied